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ABSTRACT

This paper contends that conceptions of healthy and non-healthy families and their corresponding communication behaviors and patterns are inextricably linked to cultural views of how family is defined. The paper argues that the theory from research and the pedagogy in the field are based on individualistic Euro-American conceptions of normal relationships and family. To demonstrate this point, the Mexican extended family is used in the paper as the basis for cross-cultural analysis of tenets of family and interpersonal communication theory popular in research and pedagogy. The paper sets the foundation for a program of research to include families and persons who do not share the dominant cultural views for the purpose of expanding the body of literature upon which communication scholars base their research and teaching. The paper provides specific suggestions (such as minimizing the cultural bias of theories, replacing cliche disclaimers with explicit descriptions of the nature of the culture to which a theory refers, doing more qualitative analyses to uncover the inconsistencies between cultures, and not limiting study to initial and primary sources of understanding) for the facilitation of such research, the goal of which is to diminish the likelihood of professional error in evaluating alternative cultural views of family and interpersonal communication as unhealthy or deviant due to a narrow theoretical base. (SR)

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Familia or Family?: A Demonstration of the Inability to Generalize Cross-Culturally Present Research and Pedagogy On Families and Interpersonal Relationships

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the notion that conceptions of healthy and non-healthy families and their corresponding communication behaviors and patterns are inextricably linked to cultural views of how family is defined. The theory from research, and the pedagogy in our field is based on individualistic Euro-American conceptions of normal relationships and family. To demonstrate this point, the Mexican extended family is used as the basis for cross-cultural analysis of tenets of family and interpersonal communication theory popular in research and pedagogy. The paper sets the foundation for a program of research to include families and persons who do not share the dominant cultural views for the purpose of expanding the body of literature upon which communication scholars base their research and teaching. Specific suggestions are provided for the facilitation of such research. It is the goal of such research to diminish the likelihood of professional error in evaluating alternative cultural views of family and interpersonal communication as unhealthy or deviant due to a narrow theoretical base.

INTRODUCTION

When U.S. citizens who have had the opportunity to live and work in Mexico share stories about their experiences, they often include renditions of the initial culture shock experienced when they try to do things "on their own." Obviously, culture shock is something which takes place no matter which cultures are being crossed. But for those of us interested in the areas of interpersonal and family communication, the nature of the culture shock often encountered during initial exposure to traditional Mexican culture is of particular interest. In many instances, the shock revolves around a general sense of isolation experienced when everywhere around you there are people in pairs and groups, laughing, hugging, singing, celebrating, and working, but you are never really part of it. It is much more than a challenge of "getting to know" people. It is the challenge of understanding a rather formal social system which revolves around tightly bounded extended family networks. It is the challenge of realizing that unless accepted as part of one of those networks, one's social life is never fully integrated into the social life of the surrounding society.

Probably the most central value to Mexican culture is that of familia, or family, and the understanding of what that construct is for the Mexican individual, has major implications not only for the foreigner living and working in Mexico, but for the development and application of interpersonal and family theory and research. This is much more than a glib reiteration of an academic cliche; it is a critical reality when the bulk of formally published scholarly literature in interpersonal and family communication is done in the United States. Many of the texts used in graduate programs in Mexico are translations of U.S. American books. Theories and methods are assumed generalizable in a somewhat passive but serious necessity for academic texts, and although there is increasing and valuable research being done in Mexico

by Mexican scholars, many socioeconomic conditions limit its availability. Therefore the Mexican book market is saturated with the enterprising efforts of North American publishers to increase their markets. This pattern will undoubtedly continue, so, as reputable and ethical United States scholars, we bear the responsibility of becoming accountable for the implications of our work. One way to accomplish this is to carefully reexamine our existing theoretical positions, pedagogy, and practical applications, with an eye for alternative interpretations and realities. This paper is an effort to engage in this process by providing a demonstration with a specific culture, the Mexican culture, which revolves around the extended family.

FOCUS

Discussing research done on the Mexican family, Lenero Otero (1987) confronts the problem of generalizing definitions and constructs from a Euro-American cultural perspective to the Mexican culture. Specifically, he points to questions such as "How many families live in your house?" as an example of an externally imposed conceptualization of the separation of the nuclear family from other blood relations into separate families. This is a taken-for-granted cultural perception of the dominant U.S. Anglo-European culture, and validation is readily available in the discourse of popular culture. Take for example, an interview with U.S. singer, Carly Simon, recently broadcast on the television talk show hosted by Phil Donahue (April 15, 1991). When Donahue asked her about her "family," she responded, "Which one? This one (referring to her siblings and mother)? or the one at home (referring to her two children and herself)?" This was not an odd question for the United States, where the two are popularly considered distinct family units. In Mexico the "two" are actually only one.

In an earlier paper (Gonzalez, 1989) I stressed the significance of such taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of our social constructs such as family when we, as U.S. American scholars, conduct research on human communication

in Mexico. When we carry such assumptions into our research, the research reports on a reality not real to the Mexican people. The work is therefore not valid. This phenomena is not exclusive to the U.S.-Mexican intercultural arena, however, but for this paper it will be the focus. And rather than needlessly repeating the validity of this claim, this paper will demonstrate examples of possible "misgeneralization," or what could be termed to be theoretical malpractice, in the application of U.S. communication theory in a foreign culture such as that of Mexico.

Specifically, this paper will first list and explain the characteristics of the Mexican extended family taken from my previous work (1989). Then, two theoretical areas of research in family communication will be briefly analyzed for their cross-cultural generalizability, examining implications of specific contexts of assumed reliability when it may not exist. Specifically, the areas of relationship-identity negotiation and relational dissolution will be discussed. Within each area, some basic tenets of its corresponding theory will be highlighted for analysis. The ultimate motivation for this analysis is to provide specific examples that demonstrate the lack of cross-cultural generalizability of many existing theoretical perspectives as they are currently utilized in research and pedagogy. Leading texts from the areas of interpersonal and family communication have been used as the basis for disciplinary views which have been popularly selected for dissemination through pedagogy and encouraged practical application. Following the analysis, will be a discussion of the resulting possible changes across both U.S. and Mexican academic cultures, should this type of grounded reliability analysis be incorporated into practice.

DEFINITION OF THE MEXICAN EXTENDED FAMILY[1]

[1] A more detailed explanation of the characteristics of the Mexican Extended Family is available in "Defining the Mexican Family: An Integral Step in the Research of Mexican Society," an unpublished paper presented at the 1989 ICA Annual Convention in San Francisco. It is based on fieldwork conducted while the author was a Fulbright Professor at the Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua, Mexico. The characteristics presented here have been refined and

The Mexican Extended Family (MEF) is a complex social structure influenced greatly by political, economic, and religious policy, as well as indigenous culture over a period of almost 500 years. It should not be surprising, therefore,that the characteristics which define the MEF reflect these influences greatly. As Alan Riding (1989) demonstrates in his book, Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans, it is impossible to fully comprehend Mexican culture without an examination of its turbulent, melodramatic, and whimsical history.

Likewise, the characteristics which are presented here of the MEF should be read as **cultural indicators**, and not static reflectors, of social reality. As cultural indicators, they lead our perceptions in the direction of cultural understanding, rather than claiming to provide such understanding, it being the position and conviction of the author that cultural understanding is not something that can be packaged and grasped objectively.

CHARACTERISTICS[2]

Broad Breadth of Inclusion

Because the nuclear family is the perceptual norm for the concept of family in the United States, with mother, father and their consanguinely related children being the cultural ideal, one of the first distinguishing characteristics of the MEF is the inclusion of many others as "family." Many relatives beyond the nuclear family, including aunts, uncles, grandparents, distant cousins, and in-laws are all included. In certain instances, close friends are often "adopted" into the extended family and

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in some instances expanded in response to discourse over the 1989-1991 period. Persons interested in the original paper are encouraged to request copies from the author.

[2] These characteristics have been "member-checked" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for their validity with members of the Mexican culture in Chihuahua from where they were derived. Students and faculty of the Faculty of Psychology of the Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua have conferred with me regarding their nature, and a number of the previously mentioned adaptations (Footnote 1) were in response to their feedback.

identified with familial labels[3]. It is here that the U.S. mind has trouble in seeing that when a Mexican speaks of his/her family, it means everyone.

Acceptability of Trans-Generationally Shared Living Quarters

Probably the most commonly shared stereotype of extended family cultures is that "everyone lives together." In fact, the true characteristic of the MEF is not that everyone lives together, but that everyone can live together. To a certain extent, much of the cohabitation of extended families is socioeconomically motivated in Mexico, and one will find that those MEFs living under one roof are generally those with scarce resources. However, sharing living space with one's family members is a taken-for-granted preference over alternatives which separate one from the family. Rarely do people live alone or with a group of friends as in the United States.

Sex Role Specialization

In general, one views very traditional sex roles in MEFs, with women taking outwardly submissive roles to the dominant roles of the males in the family. Women nurture the men, and men protect the women. However, unlike U.S. culture, men are very much emotionally expressive, and socioeconomic factors have long made the working woman a taken-for-granted reality in all but the higher social classes. Machismo, commonly misunderstood and misrepresented in Anglo-American culture as a male's blindly ignorant adherence to stereotypes of male dominance and strength, is in its pure sense, the masculine state of being able to take care of one's family's material and physical needs. Remember again, that "taking care of one's

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[3] This pattern of extending family boundaries to include non-blood related individuals in the family might well demonstrate some of the indigenous effects on the culture in Mexico, as many native American peoples incorporated "making of relatives" ceremonies in their regular rituals.

family" extends to more than one's wife and progeny.[4] It is interesting to watch how Mexican professional women maintain very traditional sex roles familially while also maintaining non-traditional roles in their work, and how this is not viewed as contradictory by them.[5]

High Degree of Trans- and Intragenerational Connectedness

MEFs are highly compenetradas, or characterized by a high degree of interconnectedness between members. It could be said that MEFs are all-channel networks, regardless of the number of members. No one is off-limits communicatively. This spans generations, and members readily and routinely spend time with family members not of their own generation.

Duty and Obligation Are Natural and Right

Every family relationship is characterized by mutual obligation, and that obligation is not something one has imposed upon him/herself. Rather, it is an intrinsic part of family relationship. If there is no obligation, there is no relationship. Being obligated to someone implies relationship and is therefore kept within familial ties and is cautiously extended to outsiders.[6] It is an honor to be obligated to someone, for it means you are familial with that person. Without obligations, one is alone, and in Mexico, that is the greatest interpersonal fear, soledad.

Frequent Interaction and Constant Accessibility

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[4] The pure sense of the term macho could probably be seen as roughly equivalent to the New Age popular term "warrior," seeking a sense of dignity and identity in being male, as opposed to being dominant for its own sake, often perceived to mask insecurities.

[5] I do not mean to imply that there does not exist any oppression based on the traditional roles and the resulting power differentials existing when performed in contemporary society.

[6] Consider the implications here for working relationships. This is beyond the scope of this particular paper, but given this cultural indicator, it would seem that unless a manager was able to create a family-like climate in an organization, obligation will either be nil or resented.

This is probably the most integral of the characteristics of the MEF. Family, as a construct, is maintained as a function of the interaction with family members. As interaction frequency and accessibility diminishes, the degree to which family can be said to exist lessens. This is in opposition to the family construct existing primarily as a somewhat legalistic concept, where family can be said to exist on the basis of explicit necessary and sufficient conditions such as blood or adoption.

Clear and Rigid Boundaries

The MEF has boundaries of exclusion/inclusion that are clear and rigid, and the honors, obligations, accessibility, and contact previously mentioned correspond only to those persons who are included within the boundaries. Outsiders are not bound by the expectations, but neither are they given the privilege of predictable participation in Mexican social life. Once one is admitted into the family, it is for life. Breaches of loyalty are taken very seriously, but only in extreme and grave circumstances is someone disowned. It is usually a question of honor or dignity that would motivate such a move.

Predominant Source of Identy Formation and Maintenance

Throughout life, the family is the chief source of identity formation and maintenance messages. By nature of the previously mentioned boundaries, it is a closed system, although a large one. But because it is closed, and characterized by frequent contact and constant accessibility, if a family is in any way dysfunctional, an individual can suffer a serious lack of clear identity. On the contrary, when it is normal and relatively healthy, the stability of messages from a consistent and closed social system create very stable identities with low risk of threat if one maintains loyal to the family obligations.

ANALYSIS

It is important to note before proceeding with the analysis, that Mexican culture is like all other cultures in that no characteristic of itself can be said to be

universal and applicable to all its members. It is acknowledged that there are Mexicans who are highly individualistic and consider the nuclear family to be all the family they need and/or know. It is likewise acknowledged that there are many U.S. Americans not of Mexican descent who to this day consider themselves to function within an extended family. Still, it must be stated that in both instances, these are deviations from the dominant norms and values of the overall culture, and it is those dominant norms and values which are represented in much of our literature.

Relationship-Identity Negotiation

It appears to be an accepted tenet of authors in the area of family communication that one of the key issues in the initial stages of a family (during courtship, engagement and early marriage) is the successful negotiation of one's personal identity within that relationship, as well as the negotiation of the nature of the relationship (Galvin & Brommel, 1986; Yerby, Buerkel-Rothfuss, and Bochner, 1990; Beebe & Masterson, 1986). Integral to this discourse is the idea that the individual must not lose his/her individuality to the relationship, and that there is a tension between the "loss of self" in the relationship and "new" family and the need to maintain one's individual identity. There are several cultural assumptions in this position which make this tenet questionable within a MEF.

First, the significance of a marriage is not the birth of a "new" unit. Instead, it is the growth of the already existing unit to include another married couple. It is likely that the sons- and daughters-in-law were already accepted as members of the respective extended families just by the function of their being engaged, and quite possibly even prior to that, with the courtship. Therefore, the psychological schism is not as dramatic as that supported by U.S. cultural views about the inception of marriages and "new" families. Marriage, although serious, is not considered a threat to the individual, and its inevitability is a natural, taken-for-granted part of life, incorporated into the language. In courtship, boyfriends and girlfriends are called

novios and novias, the same words used for the groom and bride in a marriage ceremony.

Second, there is the embedded assumption that individuality is prized foremost. This is where the collectivist nature of the MEF culture in Mexico sharply contests this assumption. In the MEF, it is family membership that is prized. By marrying and thereby committing to the continuation of the family unit,[7] the couple is invested in the notion of creating a semblance of group unity and perpetuation of family tradition.

Third, individuality is not lost in all this. However, it must not be forgotten that it is highly likely that the individual identity of the Mexican from a healthy MEF is quite stable at the time of marriage, due to the constant and stable identity formation and maintenance function of the MEF. This identity is likely to be considerably more stable than that of most U.S. Americans marrying whose norms are to belong to many different groups with minimal commitment to any of them (Samovar, Porter, and Jain, 1981). Therefore, creating a collective identity is not as threatening to the Mexican individual.

Stages of Relationships & Relationship Dissolution

The stages identified by Altman & Taylor (1973) and those developed by Mark Knapp (1984) have become so commonly cited in research and pedagogy that they have all but become reified as gospel truth in our field. The linear progression of these stages and their movement toward the dissolution of a relationship is implicit in their form, although Knapp is careful to point out that movement may be either forward or backward (Knapp, 1984, p. 50). The already mechanistic leanings of our western culture, however, render such epilogues moot. The assembly line always

[7] A significant influence from both Roman Catholicism and the indigenous cultures in Mexican history.

moves forward, and the stage theories imply that once one has entered a certain stage of "coming apart" (Knapp, 1984, p. 33), the relationship is suffering and is heading toward "the end." Wilmot stresses that the nature of relationships is to eventually reverse stages of becoming more intimate by "fading out" (1979,p. 156).

While it would fallacious to believe that relationships do not suffer any dissolution in Mexico, it is not in error to note that the nature of the cultural myth (stemming from a guiding world view) is that relationships are forever. This can be seen as the extension of the nature of family relationships; even in the United States people frequently say, "you can pick your friends, but you are stuck with your family." In other words, the familial relationship is defined by membership, rather than personal preferences or levels of intimacy or relational development, as relationship "filtering" models explain (Kerckhoff and Davis, 1962 and Duck, 1976).

Because the family is the structure through which all relationships are given their meaning in Mexican culture, either through inclusion or exclusion from that structure, then those relationships which last are family, and intimate, relationships, and those which do not are non-familial, and non-intimate (often primarily utilitarian). This is significant to know, given that popular interpersonal literature in the pedagogy of our field adopts economic and utilitarian models for the reasoning processes in the disengagement stages of interpersonal relationships. Wilmot (1979) provides us with an excellent account on the social exchange perspective which looks at costs, rewards, and lucrative alternatives as primary factors in the "decision" to terminate a relationship.

It is also significant to know, because rather than "tossing out the baby with the bath water," we can refine the theory to better describe the phenomena in Mexican culture. Perhaps there is a filtering and linear stage process operating in non-familial relationships, which like U.S. relationships function on a much more utilitarian and economic motivation basis. Further, perhaps when a person reaches

a certain level of consistency and obligation in their interaction with another, then they may be allowed entry into the domain of "family." Prior to that entry, relationships may be terminated routinely. Once part of the family, however, relationship termination is tantamount to religious excommunication in the Catholic Church (yet another example of possible historical, macro-cultural influences on interpersonal and family communication norms/practices). This extreme definition of the termination of a familial/intimate relationship should be reflected in persons' accounts of relationships which have "ended," and suggests one very interesting avenue for cross-cultural research. [1,2]

DISCUSSION

It should be rather obvious to the scholarly reader of this paper that the surface has just been skimmed regarding the accurate interpretation and application of family and interpersonal communication theory across cultures. The purpose of this paper was not to provide an exhaustive exposition, but rather to provide a demonstration of the types of intercultural issues that arise and arguments that can be made regarding the generalizability of our research and pedagogy. It raises questions about the motivations of scholars who adhere to the use of customary "culturally sensitive" disclaimers while demonstrating no sincere effort in their research agenda to pursue the "questions which should be addressed."

Particularly, methodological issues can be raised when dealing with cultures not as individualistic as the U.S. American culture that has given birth to so many of our theories. If the nature of collectivistic cultures is to be significantly different in many interpersonal domains, presumabily including family, then these differences should be considered in the theoretical consideration of behavior within those cultures (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1989). Ting-Toomey's (1988) work has provided us with an example of the types of theoretical propositions upon which research of

these differences might be based.

However, the ways in which we have conceptualized "objective" research may in fact limit our ability to understand exactly what is operating in a collectivistic culture. This is not a restatement of the well-worn debates on objectivist or subjectivist, quantitative or qualitative, positivist or naturalist research. Rather, the question is raised about the individualistic assumptions embedded in the very methods which we call research, whether quantitative or qualitative. Particularly, the taken-for-granted assumption that the way to understand what is operating within a culture is to ask individuals for their responses to our questions, whether in Likert scale or long interview form. Perhaps this is appropriate when we are studying U.S. culture, for in fact, it is an individualistic culture, and therefore, it is the individual perspective that we must strive to understand. But could it be possible that to study a culture such as that of Mexico, or Japan, our methods need to be re-examined to determine ways that we can get at collective representations of culture, as the collectivistic cultures experience it? We can not stubbornly stand in our individualistic world and deny that our perspective is very limited, especially when conducting cross-cultural research with collectivistic cultures.

For example, let's briefly look at the idea of personal identity in relationships as was discussed earlier in this paper. With the presently raised questions in mind, it should be considered that the term identity itself might have a distinctly different meaning when based in either an individualistic or collectivistic culture. Because "personal identity" within an individualistic culture becomes the individual identity of a separate entity, it does not automatically transfer to the collectivistic culture. Consider the possibility that personal identity itself is a function of group identity and inseparable from the group identity. This would become methodologically challenging for U.S. American social scientists who use primarily individual-centric research methods. It may become necessary to utilize research methods which allow for

collective tendencies and interpretations to be gathered from the collectivities as distinct entities, rather than collections of individuals. Cultural immersion and methods traditionally used by ethnographers would seem to be very well suited to the understanding of collectivistic norms. Could it be further true that the notion of objectivity in the social science areas of interpersonal and family relationships is itself an individualistically oriented notion, given the scientific value placed on the separation of distinct units of analysis? What happens when the social reality one is studying does not itself separate itself? What does our research reflect?

Certainly work such as that of Ting-Toomey (1988) demonstrates that with members of collectivistic cultures who partake in western-influenced educational endeavors, data is obtainable in the individual response form to which we are accustomed in our research. However, all a researcher need do is attempt to study the cultural majority (the non-college educated, working-class) of many traditional collectivistic cultures to discover that the use of our schemas and questionnaires is suspect.[3]

Several suggestions for improving the cultural bias of our theories can be offered. First and foremost, a serious commitment to the fairness of our research, realizing that our work is being translated and disseminated in cultures that do not reflect our values and norms, thereby rendering the generalizability of the theory questionable. Second, the use of growingly cliche disclaimers as to the value of "studying other cultural perspectives" tacked on to the discussion sections of our work should be replaced with explicit descriptions early in the work of the nature of the culture to whom the theory corresponds. In the first place, any communication researcher conducting research within a given culture ought to have a deep understanding of that culture, particularly if it is his/her own. The unquestioned reality and nature of taken-for-granted assumptions in one's primary culture (Hall, 1983) is a particular threat to responsible and accurate interpretation of one's

results.

Third, the type of qualitative analysis done in this paper should be done to uncover the inconsistencies between cultures, but furthermore, to aid in the identification of research topics of interest. It is my conviction that within our U.S. American culture, all scholars of interpersonal and family communication should be scholars of intercultural communication, and that the distinction currently maintained in our field only perpetuates the tradition of producing culturally skewed theory. When an understanding of the everyday culture of a people precedes discussion of theoretical constructs, the questions which evolve become conceptually rich and interesting. A lack of this type of understanding could explain the relatively sterile nature of much "cultural differences" research. Other cultural schemas have to be recognized as equally valid domains for the development of our theories and not as "alternative" domains or "deviant" domains. And fourth, when attempting to obtain such an understanding of a culture other than the dominant Anglo-European U.S. American culture, one's own studies should not be the initial and primary source of understanding. Rather, the scholar should become an avid consumer of the popular and everyday culture of the people studied. Literature, music, and art of that culture should be part of the learning process, and until it can be appreciated naturally, one should not assume a deep understanding of that culture. Our fast-food mentality and the ease with which we can access cultural abstracts should not tempt us to believe we understand. These readily available cultural capsules lead us in the dangerous direction of stereotyping and prejudice. Here, we can learn from field researchers in anthropology who are taught not to claim an understanding of a culture until members of that culture treat you as if you understand (and not out of politeness).

CONCLUSION

The primary reason for attempting this paper was to work toward the diminishing of the likelihood of professional error in evaluating alternative cultural views of family and interpersonal communication as unhealthy or deviant due to a culturally skewed theoretical base. The person who chooses to remarry an ex-husband is not deviant in Mexico. In Mexico, the person who chooses to live alone, hundreds of miles from his/her family, is deviant. When we provide the published literature of social science for much of the world, not to mention our own subcultures here in the United States, we need to consider the ramifications of implying the abnormality of that which is normal by one's own cultural standards. By highlighting specific theoretical tenets in this paper, it is hoped that they will serve as exemplars for further such analysis and theoretical introspection. This analysis and introspection can offer nothing less than breadth and maturity to the theory in our field.

ENDNOTES

1.Based on a cursory review of my cultural immersion in Mexico from 1988-1989, there is ample evidence in Mexican popular culture, including the corridos, or ballads, and the multitude of melodramatically passionate love songs, to suggest that indeed, Mexican people have two dominant categories for the "end" of intimate relationships. In the first, songs seem to reflect "cut and dry" definitions of a break with another or a relationship, with no intention of ever returning (movement may not be "backward," as Knapp would say). In these, there have been grave violations which question honor, dignity, and/or integrity, hence the "excommunication." In the second category, one hears the laments of persons dealing with emotional distance from a person who "is now and always will be part of my life." In other words, they will not be allowed out of the sphere of familial relationships. Valdes Caraveo reported (1990) that it is very common in Mexico for people to remarry their ex-spouses, even two or three times. Such views of familial and intimate relationships have implications for academic discourse on the nature of non-romantic relationships as well.

2.This area of research and pedagogy, centering on the nature of relationship dissolution, has major implications for the transferability of concepts dealing with mental health and relational wellness. Current research and popular social science in the United States focuses frequently on the topic of "codependence" (Beattie, 1987; Wilson Schaef, 1986). This work has begun to enter the realm of communication research (Taylor, 1988; Buley, 1991) as well. The total nature of the work on codependency is beyond the scope of this paper. But while we are dealing with the issue of relationship termination, it is of particular significance. A major tenet of the theory of codependence is that persons who are recovering from the "need to be needed" should seriously consider the dissolution of those "addictive" relationships. Future inquiry and analysis should seriously consider that the notion of "cutting one's losses" employs an economic metaphor for its rationality. When relationships are not tokens or assets, but rather part of one's identity as a group member (as in collectivist cultures in general), identifying an illness such as codependence carries serious implications. A culturally biased labeling of culturally appropriate behaviors as dysfunctional could result. It should be noted that members of the psychological association in Chihuahua, Mexico are currently debating the validity of the way codependence has been conceptualized within the individualistic U.S. culture.

3. I am presently in the process of developing a set of scales (with Mark Cole) which get at the notions of tradition and modernity in the Mexican foreign-industrialized city of Chihuahua. The ways in which the study had to be designed in order to gather data from a sample which was proportionally representative of available Chihuahua census reflect the care which had to be taken not only to deal with issues of theoretical and conceptual equivalence, but with issues of maximizing valid input from members of the collectivistic culture. The paper should be available in mid-1991.

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